

successful, would have drawn down upon her the severity of the laws, and endangered the security, not only of herself, but of all connected with her. Even her own position, which was one of dependence upon her friends, did not afford her the means necessary for the purpose. She would most cheerfully have given her personal services; but how far would those meet the magnitude and urgency of their wants. Dismayed by the evils which surrounded her, and unwilling to be an eye-witness of the misery which it was not in her power to relieve, she determined on seeking in the seclusion of some religious community on the continent that tranquility and power of serving God in peace which her country could not afford her. Like the afflicted daughter of Sion weeping by the river of Babylon, she could there mourn in the silence of God's house, over the hapless lot and spiritual desolation of her people."

But it was otherwise ordained, and Miss Nagle, after remaining some time in France, again returned to Ireland on the urgent advice and direction of members of the Society of Jesus she consulted, and who overcame her reluctance to encounter so difficult a mission, for which, from her delicate health, and her sex, she felt unfitted.

"The result," says our Author, "would seem to indicate, that this advice and decision were immediately suggested by the spirit of God. Miss Nagle was the instrument selected by God to accomplish his own wise ends. She was no sooner convinced that her vocation was to minister to the wants of her own poor, than she came back to Ireland, where she commenced that career of usefulness and piety, which was never interrupted until the period of her death. Not even her most sanguine anticipations could have conjectured the magnitude and importance of the good that was to result from her labors."

The following gives an accurate notion of the condition of the Catholics of Ireland at that period:—

"The condition of the Irish Catholic was truly lamentable. In the year 1745 a terrible calamity occurred in Dublin which led to some slight mitigation of the penal laws against them. The public celebration of Divine Worship being prohibited, a number of people had assembled in a store in Cook-street, in that city, to hear Mass on St. Patrick's day. The assembled crowd was so great that the beams which supported the floor gave way, and the entire congregation were precipitated to the ground. Nine persons, including the priest, were crushed to death. Lord Chesterfield was the viceroy at the time: and the sympathy elicited by the calamity, combined with his own sense of liberality, induced him to tolerate the re-opening of the Catholic Chapels for the performance of

Divine Service. It was an act of pity, not justice, on the part of the Government of the day. The incorporated society and similar bodies had been established for the avowed purpose of bringing the poorer classes over to the Protestant religion. The charter schools were in full and active operation, enormous sums of money were bestowed on them by the state, and they had all the care and patronage that the maternal solicitude of the Established Church could give them. But to the honor of the poor Irish be it said, they spurned the proffered boon of knowledge because it was coupled with apostacy. Such was the influence of the Established Clergy, that they would not permit any opposition to their views; and the government discountenanced and the laws absolutely prohibited any education by members of the Catholic persuasion. The natural and inevitable consequence of such a barbarous system of exclusion was the ignorance and degradation of the people; a degradation that would have been general and perpetual, but for the leaven of religion, which still despite the efforts of misrule, continued to pervade and vivify the mass of the population. The following extracts from a somewhat rare work, (*the Cork Remembrancer*,) give some glimpses of the state of society in the south of Ireland, about the period when Miss Nagle commenced her schools. They prove the crying necessity there existed at the time, for doing something to arrest the barbarism to which bad legislation was fast urging those, who had the misfortune of being subject to it. They are taken from a diary written at the time.

"May 23, 1768—Rioting had become so common, and arrived to such a height in this city, that it was supposed, if proper steps were not speedily taken, it would be unsafe for the inhabitants to walk in the streets, as the lawless vagabonds who engaged in such riots were most abandoned wretches, who scrupled not to commit any villany. A number of these gentry assembled in a most riotous manner in Shandon Church-yard this morning, but were dispersed upon one of them being shot dead, whether by one of the rioters, or by one of the annoyed inhabitants, is uncertain. There were likewise rioting and unlawful assemblies in other parts of the city on this and the following day, in which several of the rioters were wounded, and innocent persons abused."

"Nov. 28, 1768—For some weeks past a great number of idle vagabonds had annoyed the city by assembling in various parts of the suburbs on the sabbath day, for the purpose of cutting and hacking not only one another, but any of the inhabitants that may fall in their way."

"Dec. 3, 1769—Rioting had become so common in this city, that it was not safe for any one to stand at his door without a weapon of defence."